



To: Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Testimony submitted by Julie Hulten, President, Sleeping Giant Park Association

Public Hearing Item	Position
S.B. 12: An Act authorizing and adjusting bonds of the State for Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act matching funds and extending the time period for distributing grants for certain law enforcement equipment.	SUPPORT

I write on behalf of the Sleeping Giant Park Association (SGPA) Board of Directors, its almost 1,600 members, and the many thousands in the greater community who hike, recreate, enjoy, and treasure Sleeping Giant State Park. We request that you favorably consider this bill. **Specifically, we support the increased bonding investment of \$15 million for State Parks infrastructure** included in Section 11 of the bill.

Since 1924 our mission as an organization has been to receive, acquire, preserve, develop, and maintain land on and around the Sleeping Giant (now the State Park). Additionally, we are committed to providing educational opportunities to the public via a Pollinator Garden, themed hikes, and like initiatives. For the past seven years, it has been our goal to establish a Welcome/Interpretive Center for the Park. Unfortunately, this project, for which we would provide the contents, is still only a dream due to a lack of funding.

We are grateful for the relatively recent refurbishing of the Depression Era Tower. This work ensures the safety of visitors and the continued enjoyment of the views it affords. The investment in the Tower's rehabilitation provided a priceless incentive to hikers, young and older, to make this a target destination. Such incentives inspire more people to consider the physical and mental health benefits of out – a healthier population results in a more productive populace for the betterment of the State. In addition, the increase in outdoor recreation provides significant economic, wildlife, and other benefits to our State. According to the most recent national Bureau of Economic Analysis report, outdoor recreation in Connecticut generated \$3.3 billion in revenue and helped sustain 41,721 jobs in 2020.

Navigating and prioritizing the financial needs of the State is thoughtful work. Investing in the future of the State and its people as well as its current needs must be a consideration in your deliberations. Thank you for the vital work you do and for the opportunity to testify today on this bill.